

MARVEL

LEGACY

WAR AT THE GATES OF HELL

5

**GISCHLER
BALDEÓN
MOSSA**

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE™



For eons, the scales balancing the supernatural realms have held steady...until now. Only the strangest of alliances can save Heaven and Hell...a union of disparate heroes, counteracting the sins of mortals as...

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE

Throughout time, an ancient diplomatic summit has taken place between an emissary from Hell and an emissary from Heaven. This phenomenon is known as the Covenant.

Now, a lowly human sorcerer called Necrodamus has assembled a cursed weapon that can wipe angels from existence and he means to use it at the Covenant. He has cut a deal with the forces of Hell to upset the balance in their favor.

Tipped off by an undercover angel, Ghost Rider, Blade, Hellstorm and Satana have assembled to avert this cataclysm before it occurs.

WAR AT THE GATES OF HELL

PART V

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SPECIAL THANKS TO AXEL ALONSO



FOR
UNTOLD CENTURIES
HAVE EVENTS BEEN SET INTO
MOTION. WE'VE AWAITED ONLY
THE FINAL PUZZLE PIECE TO
FALL INTO PLACE...
A PATSY.



NECRODAMUS,
YOU MEAN.


MAN'S PETTY
AMBITIONS HAVE
ALWAYS SERVED
MY PURPOSES.

IT WILL
NEVER WORK.
SOMETHING WILL
GO WRONG. WE'LL
STOP YOU.




YOU?

THERE'S
NOTHING YOU CAN
DO. YOU'RE YOUR FATHER'S
OFFSPRING, AFTER ALL. FRANKLY,
IT WAS WORTH WAITING
THOUSANDS OF YEARS JUST
TO SEE THE LOOKS ON
YOUR FACES.



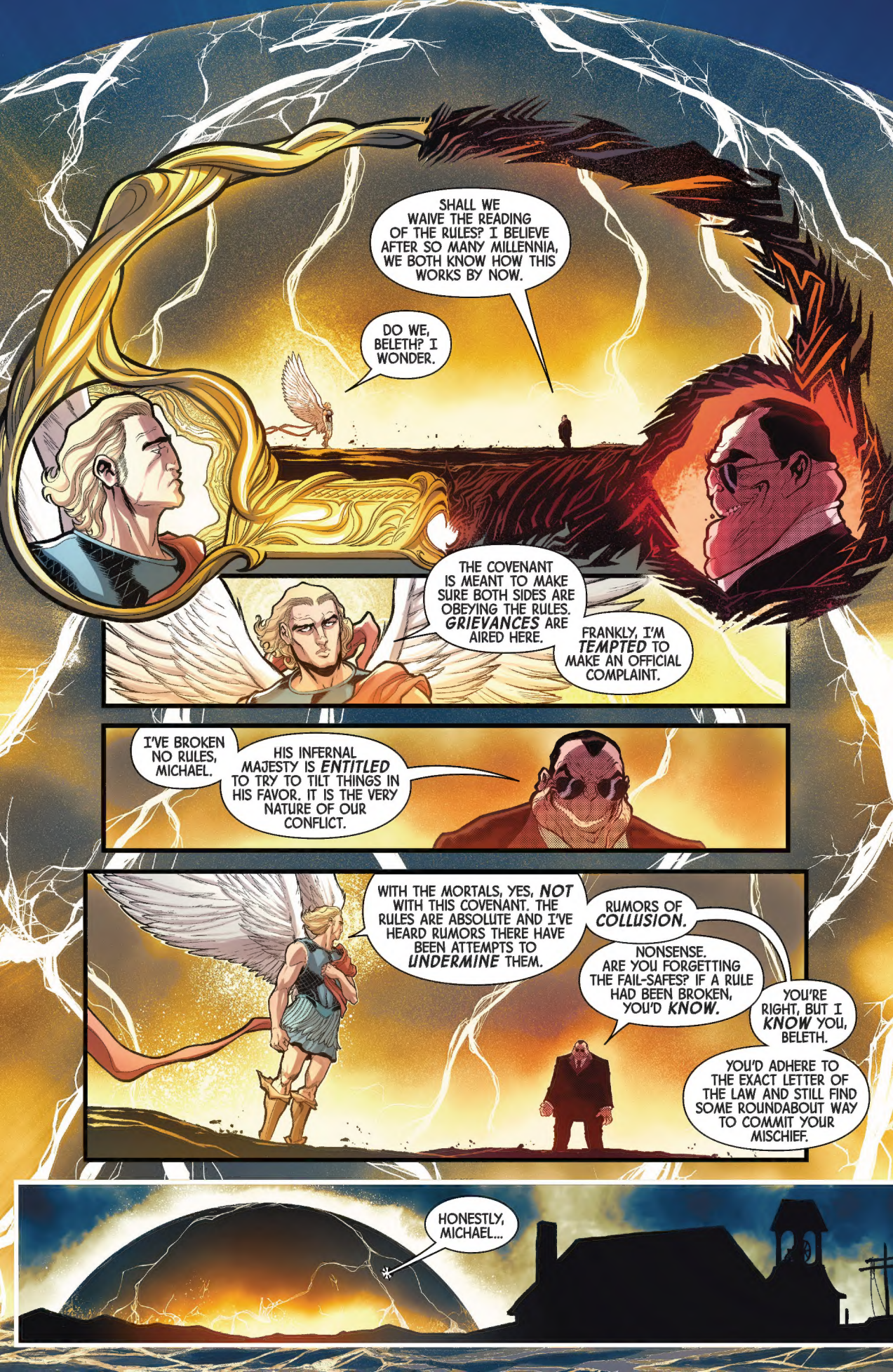
GET YOURSELVES
FRONT-ROW SEATS
FOR THE SHOW BECAUSE
WATCHING IS ALL
YOU'LL BE DOING.

**HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA!**



DAMN IT.
DO YOU THINK
HE'S RIGHT?

NO.
HE'S TOLD
US EVERYTHING
WE NEED TO
KNOW.



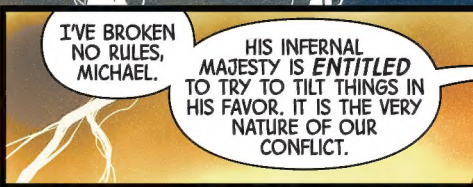
SHALL WE
WAIVE THE READING
OF THE RULES? I BELIEVE
AFTER SO MANY MILLENNIA,
WE BOTH KNOW HOW THIS
WORKS BY NOW.

DO WE,
BELETH? I
WONDER.



THE COVENANT
IS MEANT TO MAKE
SURE BOTH SIDES ARE
OBEYING THE RULES.
GRIEVANCES ARE
AILED HERE.

FRANKLY, I'M
TEMPTED TO
MAKE AN OFFICIAL
COMPLAINT.



I'VE BROKEN
NO RULES,
MICHAEL.

HIS INFERNAL
MAJESTY IS **ENTITLED**
TO TRY TO TILT THINGS IN
HIS FAVOR. IT IS THE VERY
NATURE OF OUR
CONFLICT.



WITH THE MORTALS, YES, **NOT**
WITH THIS COVENANT. THE
RULES ARE ABSOLUTE AND I'VE
HEARD RUMORS THERE HAVE
BEEN ATTEMPTS TO
UNDERMINE THEM.

RUMORS OF
COLLUSION.

NONSENSE.
ARE YOU FORGETTING
THE FAIL-SAFES? IF A RULE
HAD BEEN BROKEN,
YOU'D **KNOW**.

YOU'RE
RIGHT, BUT I
KNOW YOU,
BELETH.

YOU'D ADHERE TO
THE EXACT LETTER OF
THE LAW AND STILL FIND
SOME ROUNDABOUT WAY
TO COMMIT YOUR
MISCHIEF.

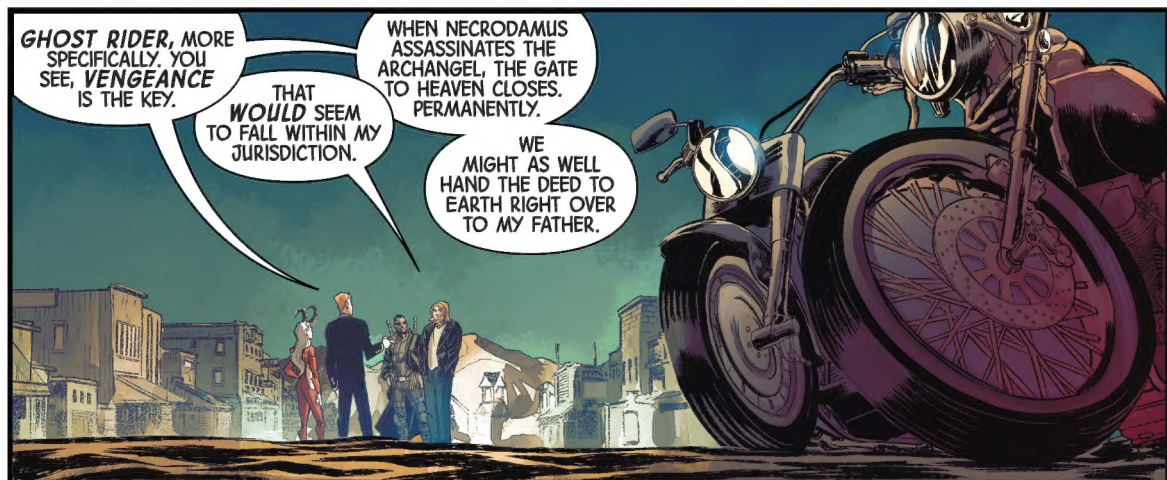
HONESTLY,
MICHAEL...





...AN ANGEL
SHOULD BE MORE
TRUSTING.

WAIT...
I'M THE KEY
TO THIS
PLAN?



GHOST RIDER, MORE
SPECIFICALLY. YOU
SEE, **VENGEANCE**
IS THE KEY.

THAT
WOULD SEEM
TO FALL WITHIN MY
JURISDICTION.

WHEN NECRODAMUS
ASSASSINATES THE
ARCHANGEL, THE GATE
TO HEAVEN CLOSES.
PERMANENTLY.

WE
MIGHT AS WELL
HAND THE DEED TO
EARTH RIGHT OVER
TO MY FATHER.



AND YOU SAID
IT WAS HIM WHO
TIPPED YOU
OFF?

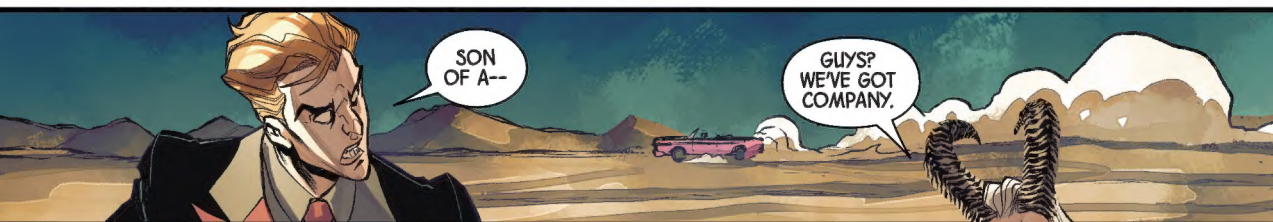
OVERCONFIDENCE LOOSENED
HIS TONGUE. HE EVEN
TAUNTED ME AND MY SISTER.
BEING HALF-DEMON PREVENTS
US FROM EVEN **ENTERING**
THE COVENANT.

ONE
REPRESENTATIVE
FROM HELL AND
ONE FROM
HEAVEN.



BUT A MORTAL LIKE
NECRODAMUS--

UH, YOU
MEAN **THAT**
NECRODAMUS RIGHT
THERE?



SON
OF A--

GUYS?
WE'VE GOT
COMPANY.



HSSSSSSSSSS
GWARRRRRR

VERY **UGLY**
COMPANY.



HE WON'T
GET FAR. NOT
FROM ME.

KEEP
THEM OFF US,
DAIMON.

I'VE
GOT YOUR
BACK.



RIGHT.



YOU WANT
THE FIRE, DEMON
SCUM?

COME
FEEL THE
BURN!



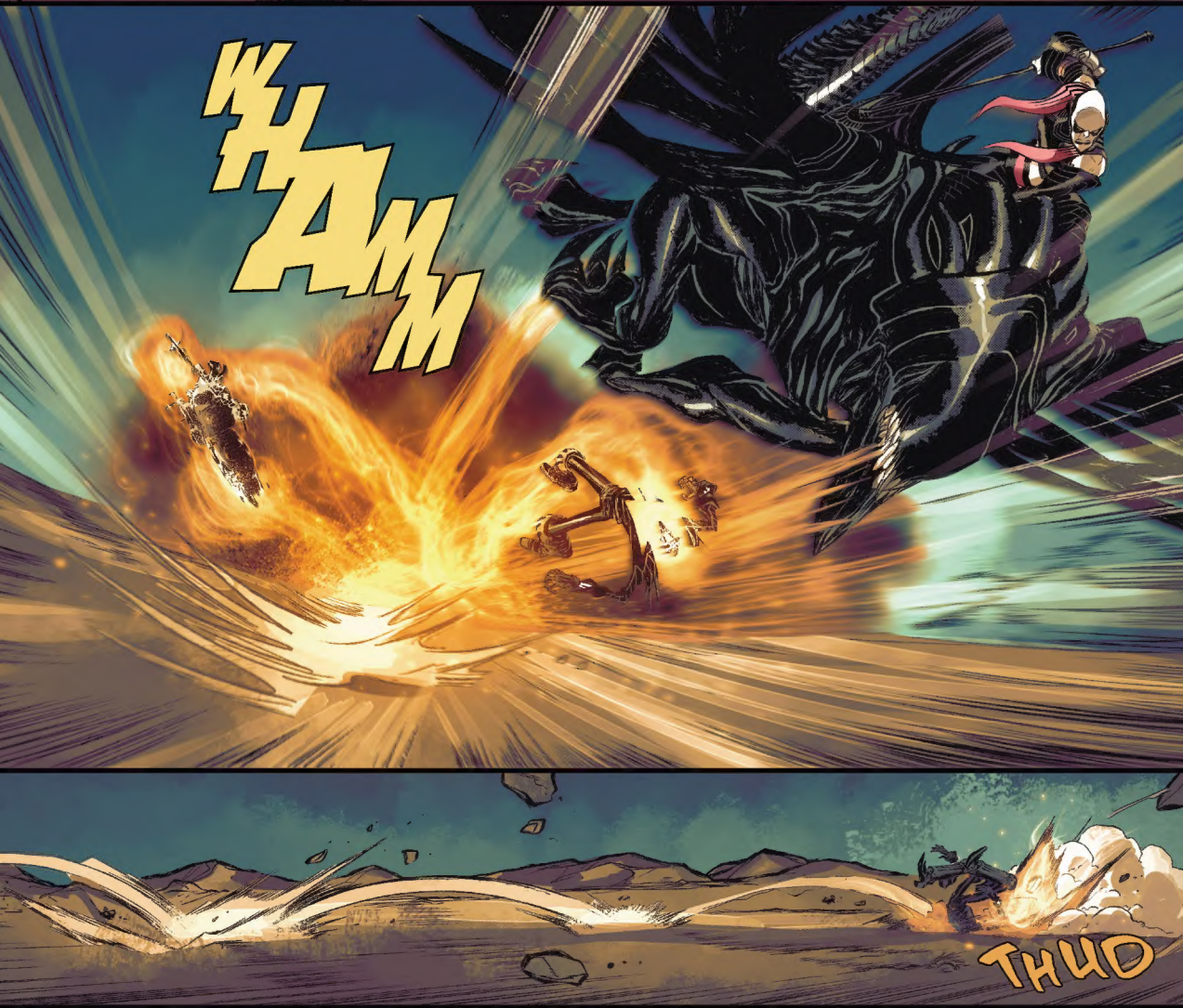
I DON'T
RELISH IT AS MUCH
AS YOU DO, SATANA,
BUT THERE'S A TIME
AND A PLACE FOR
EVERYTHING.

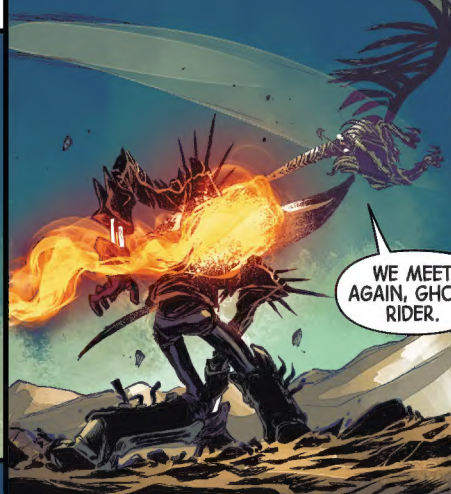
GOOD TO
SEE YOU IN FULL
FORM AGAIN, BIG
BROTHER.

FWA-SSSSHHH

VRRROOOOM







WE MEET
AGAIN, GHOST
RIDER.



I WAS ON
AN ERRAND LAST
TIME AND COULDN'T
LINGER. YOU HAVE MY
FULL ATTENTION
NOW.



YOU THINK
TO BRING ME LOW?
DO YOU KNOW NOT
I AM **GREATEST**
OF CALAMITIES?

AND IN
LOFTY HEIGHTS
THERE IS NO
REFUGE.





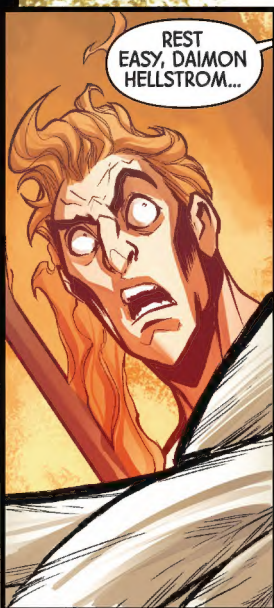


PITHY,
BROTHER, BUT I
DON'T SEE HOW
THAT HELPS US
NOW.

WELL, IF
YOU HAVE ANY
SUGGESTIONS I'D
BE MORE THAN
HAPPY TO--



WHO--?



REST
EASY, DAIMON
HELLSTROM...

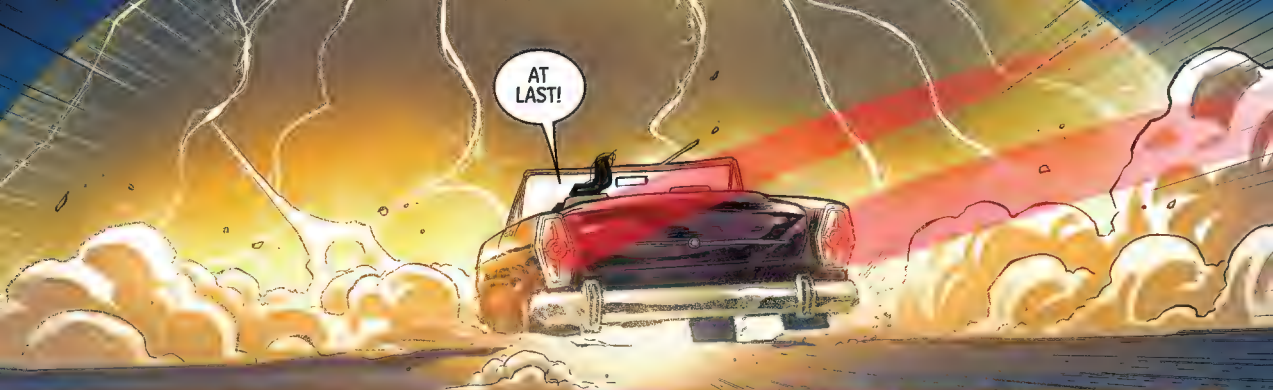


WE'LL
TAKE IT FROM
HERE.

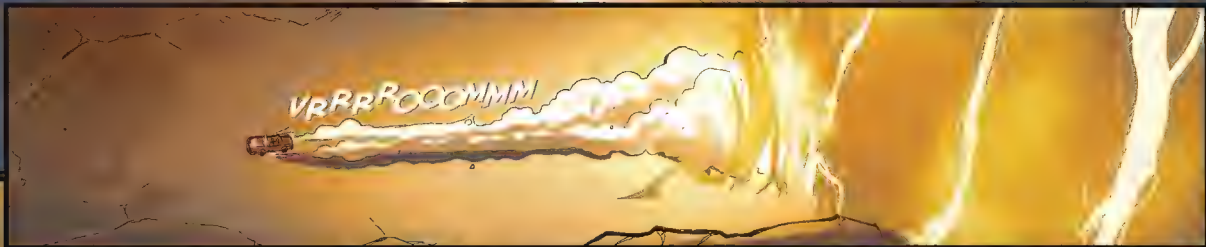


COME
ON! LET'S
GO!

REALLY?
"LET'S GO"? IT'S
NO WONDER YOU'RE
THE BRAINS OF
THE OUTFIT.



AT
LAST!



VRRRRROOOOMMM



SOME SORT
OF CHICANERY,
BELETH?

YOU KNOW
THAT INTERFERENCE
FROM ***EITHER SIDE*** IS
FORBIDDEN. NEITHER DEMONS
NOR ANGELS MAY ENTER
THE COVENANT...EXCEPT FOR
US, NATURALLY. WE'RE
THE DESIGNATED
EMISSARIES.

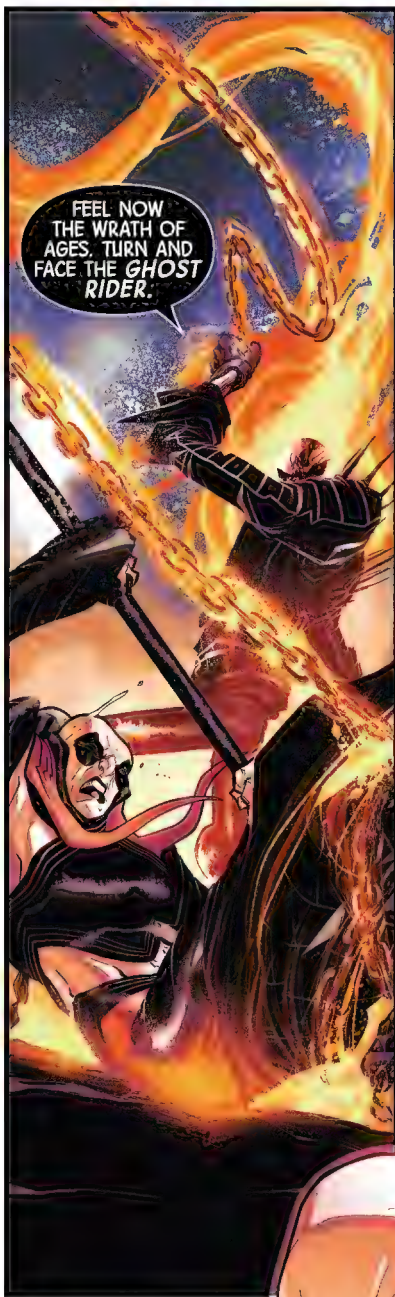
THEN THIS...
IS A MERE
MORTAL?

"MERE"?
MORTAL YES, BUT
NOT "MERE." ALLOW ME
TO INTRODUCE MYSELF.
I AM THE SORCERER
NECRODAMUS.

AND SINCE
I'M ABOUT TO
IRREVOCABLY CHANGE THE
UNIVERSE FOREVER...
WELL...



...I THOUGHT
YOU SHOULD AT
LEAST KNOW MY
NAME.

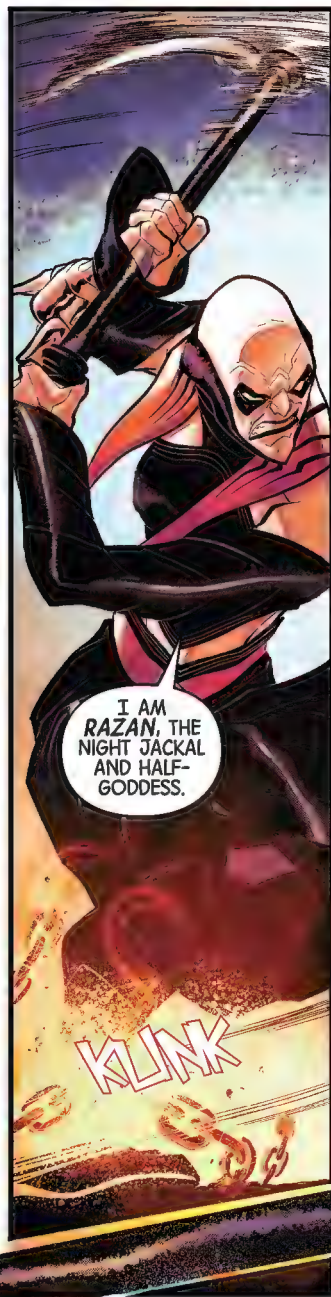


FEEL NOW
THE WRATH OF
AGES. TURN AND
FACE THE *GHOST
RIDER*.



TWAK

YOU
OBVIOUSLY
DON'T KNOW
TO WHOM
YOU SPEAK.

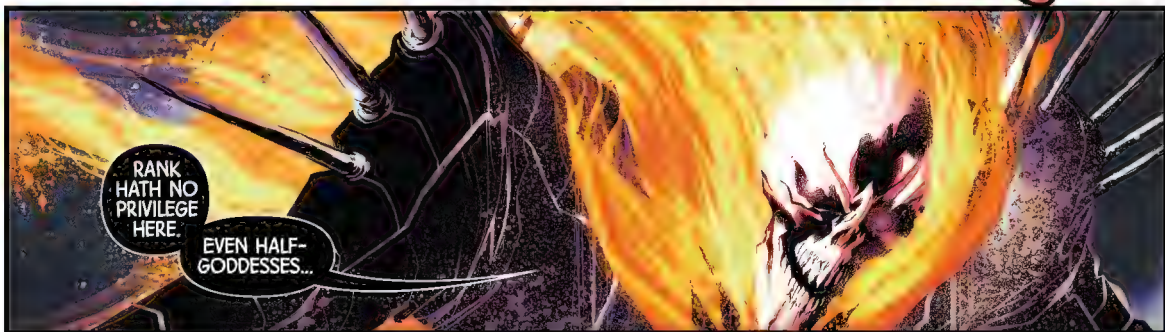


I AM
RAZAN, THE
NIGHT JACKAL
AND HALF-
GODDESS.

KUNK



LOOK UPON
ME AND SEE YOUR
DESTRUCTION.



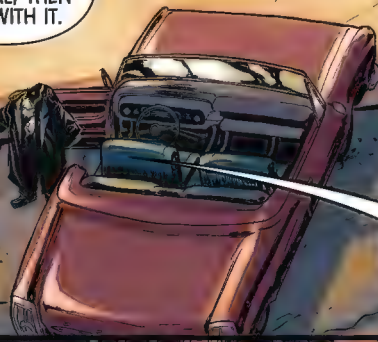
RANK
HATH NO
PRIVILEGE
HERE.

EVEN HALF-
GODDESSES...



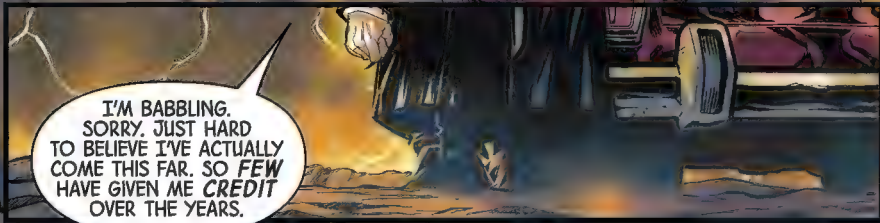


IF YOU HAVE
BUSINESS HERE,
MORTAL, THEN
OUT WITH IT.



OUT WITH IT?
YES, OUT WITH IT
IS EXACTLY WHAT I
HAVE IN MIND.

I HOPE
YOU DON'T MIND
IF I SAY...WELL...THIS IS
QUITE A MOMENT FOR
ME. IT'S BEEN A
LONG TIME IN THE
PLANNING.



I'M BABBLING.
SORRY. JUST HARD
TO BELIEVE I'VE ACTUALLY
COME THIS FAR. SO *FEW*
HAVE GIVEN ME *CREDIT*
OVER THE YEARS.

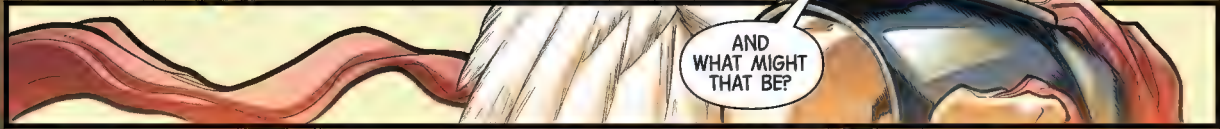
THEY'LL SEE
ME DIFFERENTLY
NOW.



I HAVE
JUST ONE SIMPLE
REQUEST, IF YOU
DON'T MIND.

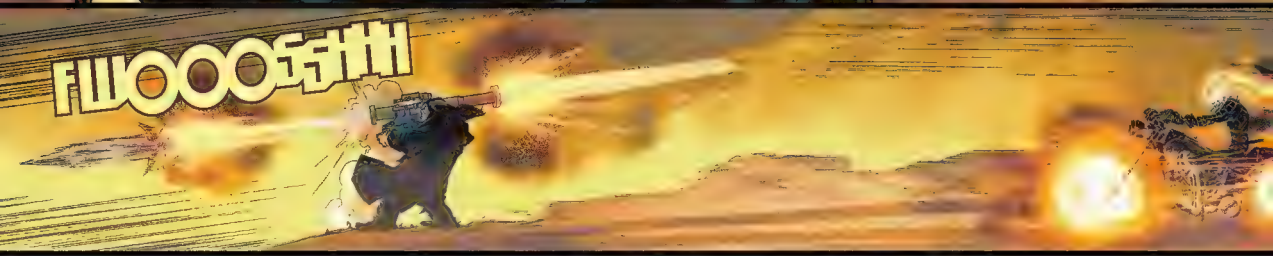


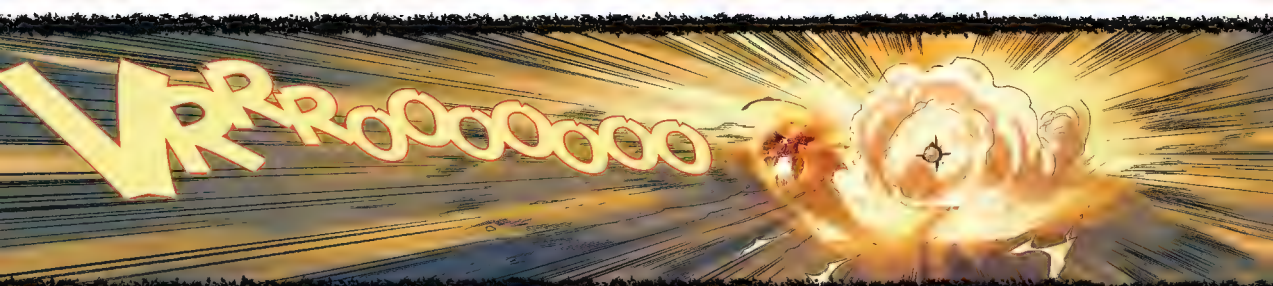
AND
WHAT MIGHT
THAT BE?

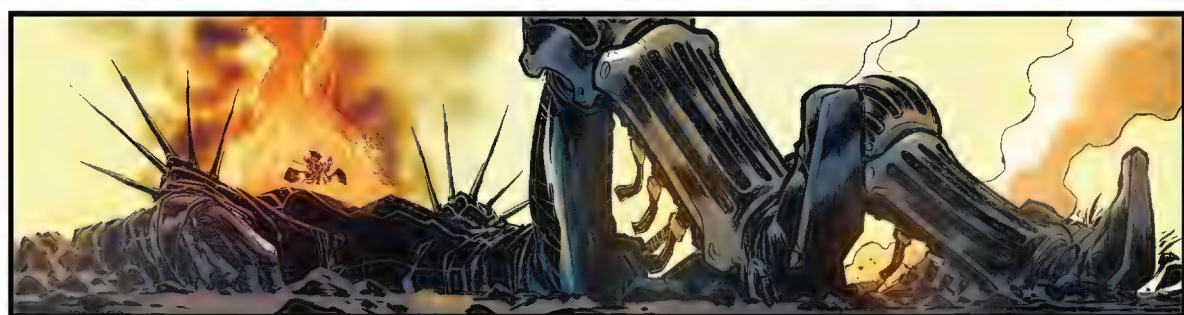
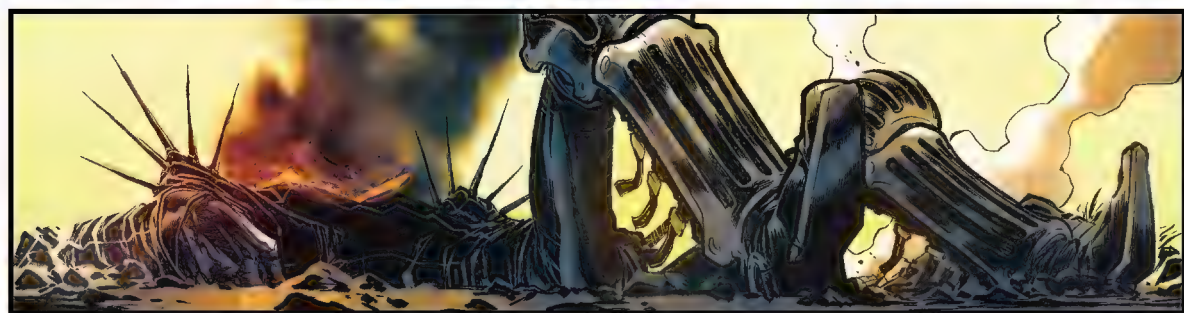
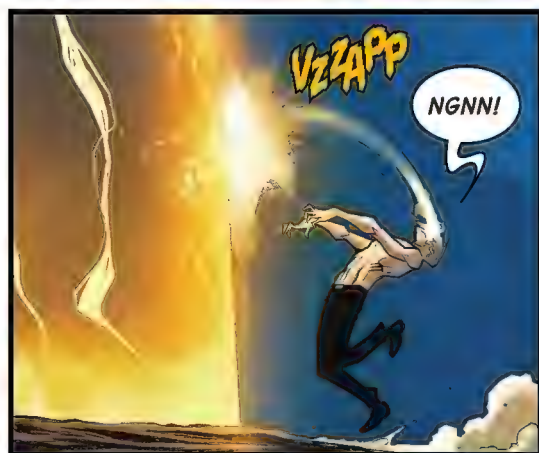
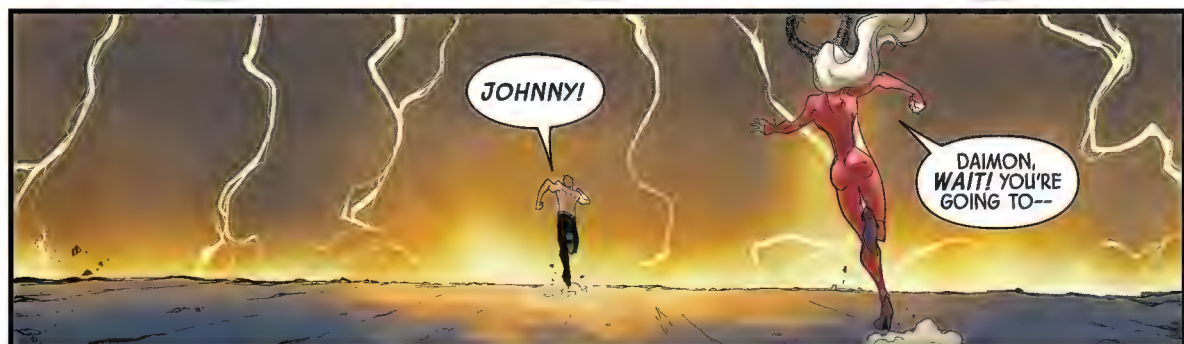


SMILE,
YOU HEAVENLY
BASTARD!

FWOOOSH!!!









YOU MEDDLE
WITH POWERS YOU
BARELY COMPREHEND,
LITTLE MAN.

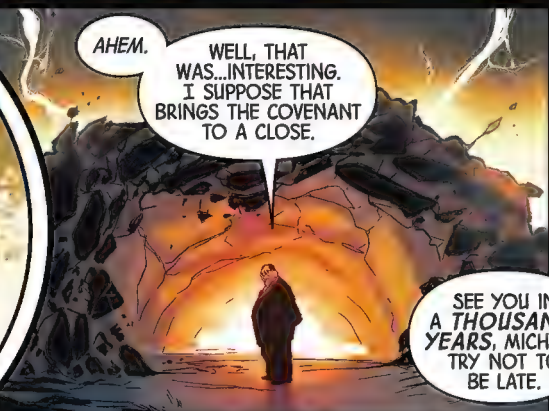
NO,
P-PLEASE.

BEHOLD
THE JUDAS SILVER.
A WEAPON OF
VENGEANCE.

AND
VENGEANCE HAS
EVER BEEN *MY*
DOMAIN.



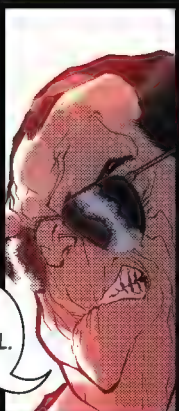
TINK
TINK
TINK
TINK
TINK



AHEM.

WELL, THAT
WAS...INTERESTING.
I SUPPOSE THAT
BRINGS THE COVENANT
TO A CLOSE.

SEE YOU IN
A THOUSAND
YEARS, MICHAEL.
TRY NOT TO
BE LATE.



I SUPPOSE
BELETH'S RIGHT.
I DECLARE THE
COVENANT
CONCLUDED.

THERE'S
NOTHING
LEFT TO DO
HERE.



UNTRUE!

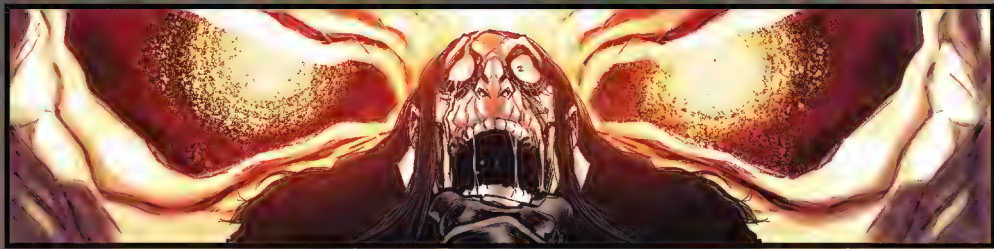
THERE
REMAINS
THE DUTY WITH
WHICH I AM
CHARGED.

VENGEANCE.

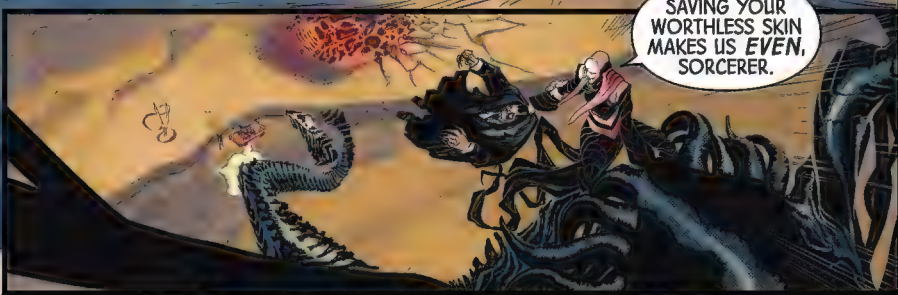


AND
PENANCE.

N-NO...
NO!



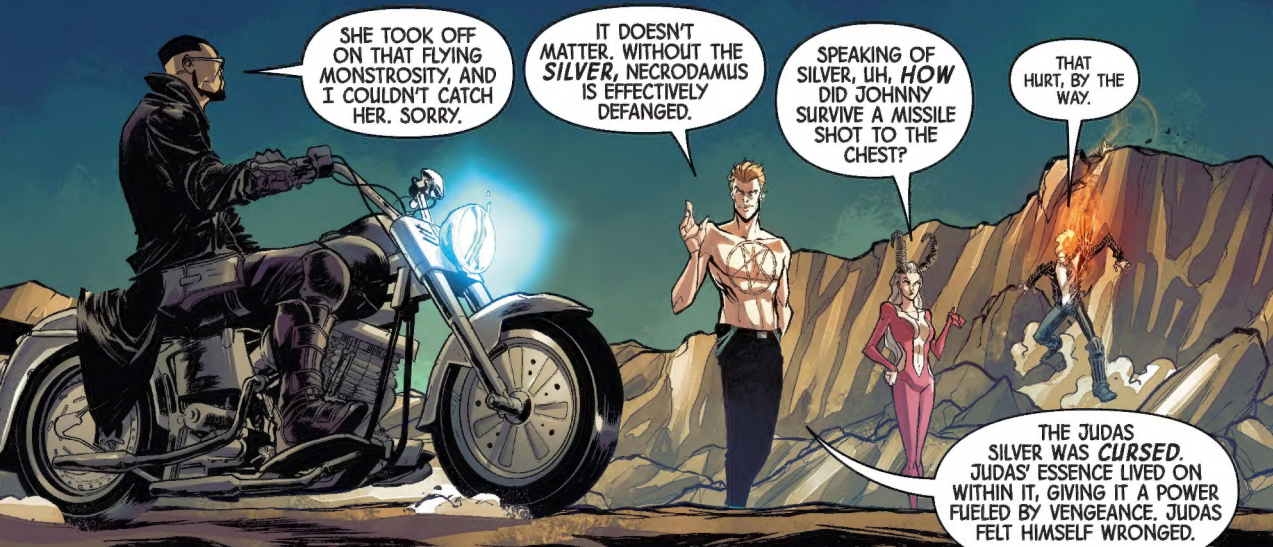
WHAT?!



SAVING YOUR
WORTHLESS SKIN
MAKES US EVEN,
SORCERER.



I SERVE
YOU NO
LONGER.



SHE TOOK OFF ON THAT FLYING MONSTROSITY, AND I COULDN'T CATCH HER. SORRY.

IT DOESN'T MATTER. WITHOUT THE **SILVER**, NECRODAMUS IS EFFECTIVELY DEFANGED.

SPEAKING OF SILVER, UH, **HOW** DID JOHNNY SURVIVE A MISSILE SHOT TO THE CHEST?

THAT HURT, BY THE WAY.

THE JUDAS SILVER WAS **CURSED**. JUDAS' ESSENCE LIVED ON WITHIN IT, GIVING IT A POWER FUELED BY VENGEANCE. JUDAS FELT HIMSELF WRONGED.

BUT THE SPIRIT OF ZARATHOS IS THE **ULTIMATE** ARBITER OF VENGEANCE, AND HOWEVER MUCH JUDAS MAY HAVE FELT WRONGED, ZARATHOS JUDGED HIS CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY TO BE FAR GREATER.

JUDGED...AND PASSED SENTENCE. AND THE GHOST RIDER WAS THE INSTRUMENT TO **EXECUTE** THAT SENTENCE.

YOU SAY "**WAS** CURSED"?

I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THE SILVER'S INTERACTION WITH THE GHOST RIDER ACTED AS A SORT OF...**CLEANSING** PROCESS. JUST A GUESS. THERE'S NO HANDBOOK FOR THIS.

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION. IN ZARATHOS' CASE, THE TERM DEMON IS USED RATHER GENERICALLY. **TECHNICALLY** THE SPIRIT IS NOT A DENIZEN OF HELL.

BUT A MUCH MORE **INTERESTING** QUESTION...

HOW COULD GHOST RIDER EVEN GET INTO THE COVENANT? **DEMON** SPIRIT, RIGHT?

...IS WHY THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS IN THE COSMOS WOULD DESIGN A COVENANT THAT WOULD ALLOW SOME BUMBLING MORTAL TO INTERFERE?

HOW COULD SUCH A MISTAKE HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE?

I CAN ANSWER THAT EASILY.

BECAUSE IT WASN'T A MISTAKE AT ALL.



HUMANITY HAS ALWAYS HAD FREE WILL. NONE OF THIS WOULD MEAN ANYTHING IF THAT WEREN'T TRUE. THAT EVEN MEANS WHAT YOU'D CALL INTERFERENCE.

MEN MUST BE ALLOWED TO BRING THE WORLD TO THE BRINK OF RUIN...JUST AS OTHER MEN MUST BE ALLOWED TO STEP UP AND STOP IT.

THERE'S ONE THING YOUR FATHER **NEVER** UNDERSTOOD ABOUT THE WAR BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL, MR. HELLSTROM.

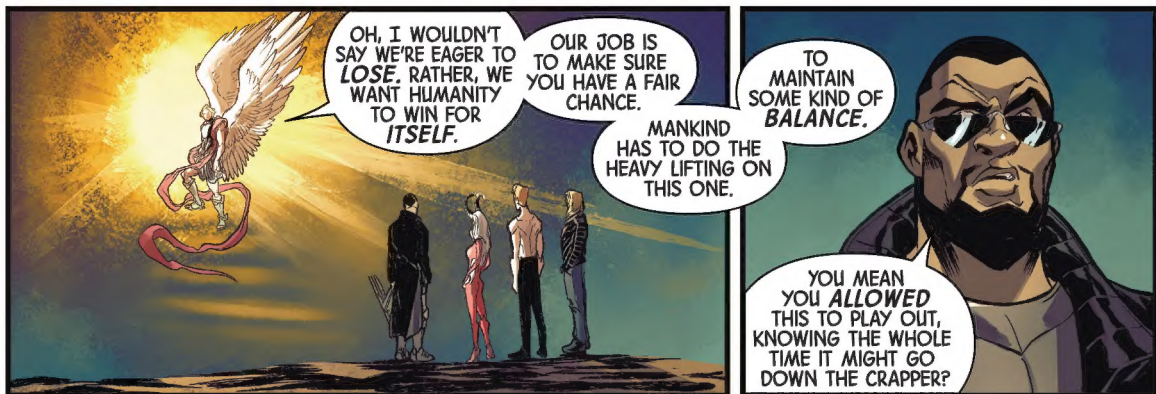
AND WHAT'S THAT?

HEAVEN WAS NEVER TRYING TO WIN.



I...DON'T FOLLOW.

YEAH, LOSING SUCKS.



OH, I WOULDN'T SAY WE'RE EAGER TO LOSE. RATHER, WE WANT HUMANITY TO WIN FOR ITSELF.

OUR JOB IS TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A FAIR CHANCE.

MANKIND HAS TO DO THE HEAVY LIFTING ON THIS ONE.

TO MAINTAIN SOME KIND OF **BALANCE**.

YOU MEAN YOU **ALLOWED** THIS TO PLAY OUT, KNOWING THE WHOLE TIME IT MIGHT GO DOWN THE CRAPPER?



WINNING MEANS LITTLE IF THE COST OF LOSING ISN'T REAL.

BUT IT DIDN'T,
AS YOU PUT IT SO
COLORFULLY, "GO DOWN
THE CRAPPER." SOMEONE
STEPPED UP. YOU
FOUR.

EACH OF
YOU HAS A **DARK**
SIDE. I'M GLAD IT WAS
YOUR **HUMAN** HALVES
THAT TOOK
RESPONSIBILITY.

HEAVEN
OWES EACH OF
YOU A FAVOR.



HMMMM. I
THINK I WOULDN'T
MIND A NEW AUDI
CONVERTIBLE.

HE SAID
A **FAVOR**.
HE'S NOT A
GENIE.

→SIGH←

THERE'S
STILL ONE MORE
UNANSWERED
QUESTION.



WHAT ON
EARTH ARE WE
GOING TO DO WITH
THAT SILVER?

END.



COMING SOON

DAMNATION: JOHNNY BLAZE, GHOST RIDER #1